

AT THE THEATRES THIS WEEK



SCENE IN ACT I, "BOUGHT AND PAID FOR" AT THE ACADEMY.

author with the proposal that he turn his book into a play. Mr. Hitchens said that he felt no adequate presentation of the scenes could be made on the stage. Mrs. Antonio de Navarro, the Mary Anderson of earlier years, had urged him to make a play of the story, but he could not be persuaded that it was possible. For the time being Mr. Tyler acquiesced. Then he communicated with Mrs. de Navarro. Twenty years ago, when Mary Anderson was the idol of the American public, she was affectionately known as "Our Mary" throughout the country. She was not only a consummate actress, but a young woman whose ideals and devotion to her church won the admiration of everyone. Since her retirement from the stage her religious feeling has in no wise abated. The depths of religious feeling that permeates "The Garden of Allah" won her heart, and she determined to bring every influence to bear on the author to have it put on the stage. Assured by a personage who had won much success in the theatrical lists, Mr. Hitchens agreed to attempt the work. Mrs. de Navarro would act as his collaborator. Owing to the reluctance to have her name associated again with any theatrical enterprise after she had refused to return to the stage so often, she declined to be named as his co-worker, though the rumor became so persistent that she admitted the truth when confronted by newspaper interviewers in New York. During the last ten days of rehearsal she and Mr. Hitchens were both present and confessed that they were overwhelmed by the reality of the desert scenes shown on the stage. On the night that "The Garden of Allah" was first produced, Mr. Hitchens said before he left the Century Theatre:

"Mrs. de Navarro told me last eve-

ning that she had seen nothing on any foreign stage that could approach the effects attained in this production. She loves the desert. She knows it in all its phases, and, like me, she dreaded her first glimpse of an artificial Sahara. But what we have seen is the desert itself! The scenic artists have stolen the secret from its sandstorm, and read the mystery of its dawn.

The barbaric music which precedes the rising of the curtain in the scene showing the Street of the Ouled Nails, echoes the strains which may be heard every night in the year Biskra. Of the music, melody of the desert, the Arabs never tire. It plays on the nerves of travelers from America and Europe with its lure of the unknown, with its invitation to the sands. And when the curtain rose, and down the empty moonlit street the dancer, in her crown and feathers, passed by with her Arab gallant, I felt that this magic carpet had been spread for me by some kind magician and that I was back in that wonderful Paradise, the great Garden of Allah."

"The Common Law."

Theatre patrons of this city have richly felt most kindly toward book-plays, especially dramatizations of a popular novel; hence it is not at all surprising to note with what special interest "The Common Law," the dramatic version of Robert W. Chambers' sensational book, is being regarded as a play wholly intended to furnish an entertainment decidedly in touch with the dramatic pleasures of the great masses of amusement seekers.

"The Common Law" will be offered at the Blou Theatre all of this week, starting 10-morrow night, after having been presented in many of the leading cities at \$1.50. The usual matinee Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are announced.

It was particularly noticeable that

the interest which gave to the novel its far-reaching command had, instead of being lessened, become accentuated for acting purposes, and the audience, many of whom were familiar with the book, manifested no small appreciation for the admirable work performed by the play doctor.

The cast employed with a view of upholding the dignity of this offering, taken in its entirety, is said to be one of the finest organizations ever assembled, and there has been bestowed splendid consideration with regard to the scenic environment, even going so far as to include all of the furnishings and furniture, as part of the stage equipment. One thing "The Common Law" does prove, and that is the assumption made by writers on theatrical topics that the dramatist has a much harder task to perform in doing if three or four acts what the average novelist may do in some 300 pages of a book. Therefore, it may be said that the ground covered in the novel by Mr. Chambers is traversed in the play with rapidity and with results which are satisfactory. Mr. Chambers' novel is chiefly made up of the mental conflict of a young girl who loves an artist and is afraid to marry him, because she is afraid it will ruin his career and divorce him from his social life in a set in which she thinks she does not rightly belong.

Return of the Helm Children.

Since the first appearance in this city of the Helm children, Willie (Bud) and Nellie, and that was in January of 1909, it is not an exaggeration to state that no cleverer pair of young people have been seen here. When they were ten and twelve years old, respectively, they came to this city. That was the unanimous approval of the fact that they have in the past two years appeared in every high class vaudeville house in this country, and their return to this city, which was arranged for the Colonial by engaging them for the "big time" circuits at a salary three times as great as they received when they first appeared. This time the child himself is assisted by Sig. Kretore, brilliant touch to the new and clever people, together with the singing excellence of the pair, for the girl especially noted. Newness of material, scenic equipment and ripening talent and beauty assures for them a hearty reception when they make their appearance on Monday next.

What is accounted the best animal act in the entire vaudeville field will present itself in the offering of Klutzing's animal entertainers. Dogs, cats and other domestic animals, capable of trained in feats that are expected only of the human, with the necessary comedy introductions, will provide amusement for young and old.

An original comedy playlet, "Nearly a Job," introducing the pretty Maybelle Palmer and the brilliant black-face comedian, Arthur Wanzel, will provide one of the classic and amusing features. An odd line of entertaining dialogue, supplemented by some musical songs and dancing numbers, promises to make this offering a feature number.

The Venita Clark Trio, a gathering of young people, two boys and a girl, will offer the novel exhibition of pre-walking, at which they are so excellent. Being worthy of comparison with the famous Sullivan trio. A monologist and singer, author of the songs he sings, writer of the stories he tells, promises one of the most original numbers yet seen in this city along this line.

Perfect picture plays the best type, approved by the National Board of Amusement, will add their share of amusement and instruction to the three daily programs, there being a matinee at 2 o'clock and two night performances at 7:15 and 9 o'clock, respectively.

The Pinafore Kiddies at the Empire.

Two important items in the Empire's program are the Pinafore Kiddies in a presentation of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera "Pinafore," to be given during the week now on. First of these is the fact that "Pinafore" has retained its popularity longer than any other comic opera on the boards. Second will be by a troupe of juvenile performers, twenty-seven in all, with a knowledge of the "Pinafore" and an aim in comparison with the many adult productions seen here.

best ever seen in the role. Also is the true of Edward Lambert, Florence Perret, Arthur Harris, Jerome Tobin, Hazel Rice, Gladys Smith and the others. There are twenty-seven of them in the company, the girls of them said to be so pretty that they would make a flower garden look like a London fog in comparison, and every member is in his or her teens.

With three daily performance and four on Saturday, it is expected that the crowds sure to be attracted by the genuineness in value of the offering may be accommodated. The matinee every day is at 2 o'clock, and the evening hours being 7:30 and 9 o'clock.

At the Last Theatre.

"The Last Blockhouse," a two-reel Kalem feature, will be shown at the Little Theatre to-morrow. A party of Western pioneers, while constructing a blockhouse, are guarded by a troop under Captain Steele. He annoys Dot,

the wife of Jim, a young settler, and she is quickly repulsed. Infuriated at her scorn, he incites the Indians to attack the settlers. The blockhouse is destroyed. Crow, a half-breed, captures Dot and rides off toward the camp. Jack, the sole survivor, manages to reach his young husband, who is away in the woods. They rescue Dot, and in a hand-to-hand struggle with Crow, Jim avenges the fate of the pioneers.

At the Tuesday recital, Master Forrest Cubbon, the popular boy soprano, will sing Irving Berlin's latest success, "When I Lost You."

Lucille LaVerne Company.

The Lucille LaVerne Company opens at the Academy April 22. The coming of these players marks the beginning of what promises to be the greatest jubilee in the history of stock companies in Richmond. After making all arrangements to head her own company, Miss LaVerne evolved the idea of making her season this year a grand home-coming of all the stock favorites. Among those whom she desired and sought are Richard Bennett, Donald Brian, Grace Scott, Catherine Carter and Ralph Morgan.

Mr. Bennett almost forgot "Stop Thief" in which he had been starring at \$1,000 a week all season, and his own play about to go on, "Damaged Goods," when Miss LaVerne approached him with the proposition of his returning to Richmond for a few weeks. The outcome of the conference was that Mr. Bennett will appear at the Academy for two weeks in May. Donald Brian wired from the West, where he is starring in the "Siren," that he had planned a trip abroad at the close of his season, but that he would postpone it in order to return to Richmond, and was wiring Mr. Frohman for permission.

Catherine Carter has promised to return to Richmond after the closing of "The Passing Show of 1912," in which she is playing, and Ralph Morgan will take a week off from his company in Grand Rapids and run down and shake hands with his friends.

Not satisfied with this list Miss LaVerne made arrangements to have Nance O'Neil appear at the Academy in "The Lily," in which she had her great starring success under Belasco.

Tracy Scott will head the opening bill, which is to be Grace George's comedy, "A Woman's Way." During Miss Scott's many years in Richmond with the Giffen Company, she won the esteem and admiration and friendship of a host of theatre-goers, and in the excellent vehicle she has chosen for her return she will more than do justice to her reputation.

Polk Miller and Colonel Booker, Under the auspices of R. E. Lee

amount of the fun and enjoyment of the evening will be provided by Mr. Miller's justly famous Old South Quartet of genuine Virginia negroes, of whom a New York critic said they "look like farm hands and sing like 'Carusos'."

When Mrs. Schumann-Heink, the world-renowned prima donna, was in Richmond this winter, she had an opportunity to hear these negroes sing, and said "It was the most wonderful thing I had heard in America, and that it was genuinely original music. Each year it has been the custom of Lee Camp to raise a fund for the purpose of sending some of the 'boys' to the annual Confederate reunion. A goodly proportion of the receipts of this entertainment will be devoted to this purpose this year, and the reunion will be held at Chattanooga the latter part of May."

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Exercise Your Hospitality

What better time to ask your out-of-town friends for a visit than the week of the May Festival? What greater treat could you offer persons of refinement and culture than the opportunity of hearing the divine voice of a Bonci, the exquisite singing of a Bettie Booker, the tremendous playing of a Tina Lerner, the glorious ensemble of an orchestra like this one—or, finally, witnessing the appearance of that noble Richmond organization, the Wednesday Club Chorus?

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